

Application No. 10/790,532
 Amendment dated October 19, 2006
 Reply to Office Action of May 19, 2006

Docket No.: HO-P02877US0

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) In a fence brace assembly having A fence brace assembly comprising:

at least one substantially hollow post, comprising at least one a stabilizing surface and at least one a securing surface, said stabilizing surface and said securing surface being substantially opposite each other and having an inner surface and an outer surface;

at least one member, comprising at least one tab;

wherein said stabilizing surface comprises at least one opening, and said securing surface comprises at least one tab-slot;

wherein said member passes through said opening in the stabilizing surface;

wherein said tab engages enters said tab slots in said securing surface; and

wherein said tab is engaged with said tab slot so as to prevent disengagement of said tab from said tab slot.

wherein the improvement comprises:

said tab having a notch;

said tab-slot shaped to engage said tab when said member is rotated to engage the tab with the tab-slot; and

said member having a tab end consisting of at least one tab and a recessed non-tab surface;

said recessed non-tab surface shaped to come into substantially continuous flush contact with the inner surface of said securing surface when the tab is engaged via rotation of the member to engage the tab with the tab-slot via the notch.

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2. (Currently Amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, wherein ~~said stabilizing surface and said securing surface are both in the outer surface of said post.~~ said opening is located directly opposite to at least one tab-slot, so that when the tab is engaged with the tab-slot, the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at an angle of about 90° relative to said stabilizing surface.
3. (Currently Amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, ~~further comprising:~~

 ~~at least one angle brace foot post; and~~

 ~~at least one angle brace member.~~

 wherein said opening is not directly opposite, but offset from at least one tab-slot, so that the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at a non-90° angle relative to said stabilizing surface.
4. (Original) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, wherein said post is comprised of metal tubing.
5. (Original) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, wherein said member is comprised of metal tubing.
6. (Original) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, wherein said opening corresponds in shape and size to said member.
7. (Original) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, wherein said member passes snugly through said opening.
8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Original) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, wherein the size and shape of said tab-slots corresponds to said tabs.

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11. (Canceled)
12. (Original) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, further comprising at least one recess in the securing surface capable of receiving a bent tab.
13. (Original) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, produced by a process wherein said opening is cut by laser.
14. (Currently Amended) A method for assembling a fence brace assembly, having the steps of: ~~A method for assembling a fence brace assembly, comprising:~~

providing at least one substantially hollow post, comprising ~~at least one~~ a stabilizing surface and ~~at least one~~ a securing surface, said stabilizing surface and said securing surface being substantially opposite each other and having an inner surface and an outer surface;

providing at least one member, comprising at least one tab end, said tab end having at least one tab and a recessed non-tab surface;

wherein said stabilizing surface comprises at least one opening, and said securing surface comprises at least one tab-slot;

passing said member through said opening;

~~passing said tab into said tab slot; and~~

~~engaging the tab to the tab slot to prevent disengagement, provided the engaging is not accomplished by welding.~~

wherein the improvement comprises:

providing a notch in said tab;

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providing a tab-slot being shaped to engage said notched tab when said member is rotated to engage the tab with the tab-slot;

providing a shaped non-tab surface of the member, shaped to come into substantially continuous flush contact with the inner surface of said securing surface when said tab is engaged via rotation of the member to engage the tab with the tab-slot via the notch;

passing said at least one notched tab into said tab-slot;

and rotating said member to:

i) engage said notched tab with said tab-slot; and

ii) to position the recessed non-tab surface of said member into substantially continuous flush contact with the inner surface of said securing surface.

15. (Currently Amended) The method for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 14, wherein ~~said tab engages in its corresponding tab-slot without requiring welding or additional fastening.~~ opening is located directly opposite to at least one tab-slot, so that when the member is rotated into the engaged position, said at least one tab is engaged with said at least one tab-slot, such that the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at an angle of about 90° relative to said stabilizing surface.
16. (Currently Amended) The method for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 14, wherein ~~the tab is engaged with the tab slot in a manner selected from the group consisting of bending, crimping, gluing, pinning, screwing, twisting, bolting, and via rotating a notch in the tab.~~ opening is not directly opposite said tab slots, but is offset from at least one tab-slot, so that when the member is rotated into the engaged position, the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at a non-90° angle relative to said stabilizing surface.

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17. (Currently Amended) The method for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 14, ~~further comprising passing said member through said opening at an angle wherein the longitudinal axis of the member is at approximately a 90° angle to the stabilizing surface.~~ having the additional step of sealing the area of substantial contact between the non-tab surface of the member and the inner surface of the post is sealed.
18. (Currently Amended) The method for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 14, ~~further comprising passing said member through said opening at an angle wherein the longitudinal axis of the member is at a non 90° angle to the stabilizing surface.~~ 17, wherein the sealing is done using a silicon sealer.
19. (Original) The method for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 14, further comprising bending said tab over an edge of said tab-slot into a recess in said securing surface, such that said tab is flush with said securing surface.
20. (Currently Amended) A kit for assembling a fence brace assembly having component parts capable of being assembled, the kit comprising:
- at least one post, capable of being joined to at least one member;
 - at least one member, capable of being joined to the post;
 - said post comprising:
 - ~~at least one stabilizing surface, comprising at least one opening; and~~
 - ~~at least one securing surface, comprising at least one tab slot;~~
 - i) a stabilizing surface and a securing surface, said stabilizing surface and said securing surface being substantially opposite each other and having an inner surface and an outer surface;
 - ii) at least one tab-slot in said securing surface, said tab-slot capable of accepting and engaging a notched tab by the via rotation of the tab;

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said member comprising:

~~at least one tab;~~

~~wherein said member is capable of penetrating said opening in said stabilizing surface of said post; and~~

~~wherein said tab on said member is capable of engaging the tab slot in said securing surface of said post to prevent disengagement; and~~

~~whereby said member may be joined to said post.~~

iii) at least one tab end consisting of at least one tab and a recessed non-tab surface,

iv) at least one tab being notched and thereby being capable of engaging with the tab-slot when said member is rotated;

v) said recessed non-tab surface shaped to be capable of coming into substantially continuous flush contact with the inner surface of said securing surface when said tab is engaged via rotation of the member to engage the tab with the tab-slot; and

said member and said post being capable of being joined by inserting said tab end of said member into said opening in said stabilizing surface of said post and rotating said member to engage the notched tab in the tab slot, and therefore being capable of forming a substantially continuous flush contact between the non-tab surface of the tab end of the member and the inner surface of said securing surface when said member is joined to said post.

21. (Currently Amended) The kit for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 20, ~~wherein said opening in said post corresponds in shape and size to said member.~~ said opening is located directly opposite to at least one tab-slot, so that said member is

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capable of being rotated into the engaged position with said post, such that when the post and the member are joined, the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at an angle of about 90° relative to said stabilizing surface.

22. (Currently Amended) The kit for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 20, wherein ~~said tab slot in said post corresponds in shape and size to said tab,~~ opening is not directly opposite said tab slots, but is offset from at least one tab-slot, so that said member is capable of being rotated into the engaged position with said post, such that when the post and the member are joined, the longitudinal axis of the member is oriented at a non-90° angle relative to said stabilizing surface.
23. (Currently Amended) The kit for assembling a fence brace assembly of claim 20, wherein ~~the tab is engaged with the tab slot in a manner selected from the group consisting of bending, crimping, gluing, welding, pinning, screwing, twisting, bolting, and via rotating a notch in the tab,~~ the area of substantial contact between the non-tab surface of the member and the inner surface of the post is capable of being sealed.
24. (Currently Amended) The fence brace assembly of claim 1, wherein ~~the tab is not engaged with the tab slot by a weld,~~ the sealer is a silicon sealer.
25. (Canceled)
26. (Canceled)
27. (Canceled)

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